



## ***PARCing Information Throughout the Corps (PARC Staff)***

### **Credit Card Mania**

*By Jerry Merchant*  
**HQUSACE**

#### ***The Government-wide Commercial Credit Card Program***

Interestingly enough, "credit cards" are now being officially termed "purchase cards", but we still owe the money when we use them. We are in the Ninth year of the present GSA contract. The new contract has been competed and new award announcements are expected almost momentarily.

For those that thought there was a new award last year, sorry. That was a change of platforms from Rocky Mountains BankCard Systems to that of its parent, FirstBank. (Which subsequently became US Bancorp). The department of Defense was shifted to a standard commercial platform which among other things, made the corporate center the Approving Officials and his/her cardholders, rather than the entire activity. In the event of nonpayment, only the smaller group is at risk for card suspension, and the reporting thereof. The overriding benefits of this change are painfully obvious, but the transition was painful as well. The Office of the PARC would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your efforts.

The Corps of Engineers went into commercial credit cards in the first year of the contract and it has been quite a learning experience. The Agency Program Coordinators (APC's) in our Districts and Laboratories are probably one of the best resources in the Federal Government insofar as knowledge of this program is concerned.

Our good news this month is that the backlog of invoices from the old Rocky Mountain platform are nearly cleared. The bad news is that invoices from the new CPS platform are aging rapidly. All commercial banks are privy to our payment records, and the Governments in general and this will of course be factored into future proposals from the financial community. The transparency of credit card transactions for audit purposes has been stressed, but we need to stress too that payment histories are extremely public. Your friends and neighbors know the good work the Corps does, but if we are remiss in paying our bills, they'll know that too. While we know that these are business processes that need to be fixed, they don't know that at all. We do not want any tarnish upon our reputation or integrity. More next month.

### **Government Property - DoD Property in the Custody of the Contractors and Reports of Disposition**

*By Kathleen M. Wysocki*

Note: Within the context of this note, the term "Government property" refers to the management of Government property in the possession of Contractors.

Contracting personnel are required to forward accurate, complete and timely information to Army. The OPARC found that many USACE contracting personnel are unfamiliar with content requirements and preparation for completing DoD forms required by Army. As a result, USACE routinely has been unable to meet regulatory requirements and requests having high DoD visibility.

Army focal points have had to expend a considerable amount of time to obtain accurate information from Corps' offices (contracting or other). This in turn has caused past PARCs and OPARC personnel to divert effort and resources from other priorities.

Exasperating the situation, many USACE contracting offices do not seriously consider the requirements imposed by DoD/ SARDA as their responsibility, because USACE, by virtue of its mission statement, has customarily placed the requirement upon supply and logistical management personnel. In general, neither logistics management, supply, or contract property personnel are trained. The

Corps does have a few GS-1103 in the workforce.

AFARS 45.505 requires property administrators to forward a copy of a DD Form 1662, DoD Property in the Custody of Contractors, for each contract administered by Army to SARDA's focal point at the U.S. Army Industrial Engineering Activity (IEA) by 5 November of each year.

Each year IEA provides each contracting office with a listing of their previous years contracts requiring updating and in the past several years, guidance/directions to accurately complete the necessary forms. Army's proactive assistance has been to no avail.

By mid-December, Army routinely has to request assistance from the PARC to obtain the forms and then initiates a concerted effort to correct all errors on a case by case basis. This last year, 05 November 1997 requirements requested by Army were forwarded from USACE field offices on 21 JAN 98. As Army's requests are funneled through PARC channels, it can be said that Army assumes the effort is accomplished by trained GS-1103, Property Administrators, or GS-1102, Contract Specialists. USACE organizational guidelines generally have contracting offices forwarding these requirements to the Office of Logistics Management for completion by GS-345/6, Logistic Managers, or GS-2000 Supply Technicians, prior to being forwarded to Army. Many contracting offices, without in-depth subject matter knowledge, do not complete a thorough review of their DD Form 1662 submissions.

Recently, Mr. Hamre, Deputy Secretary of Defense, through his Management Reform Memorandum No. 5 of May 21, called for a plan to dispose of all excess Government property in the possession of contractors by 01 January 2000. Because of this initiative, we are, now, required to furnish quarterly reports on the disposition of excess DoD property using a DD Form 1638, Report of Disposition of Contractor Inventory. This January, we found USACE contracting offices unfamiliar with the form, who at Army's prompting had to correct and resubmit its information. It is unclear if higher level reviews at the districts and MSCs are performed prior to information being forwarded to higher level headquarters.

The OPARC recognizes, it has not taken an aggressive position in providing job specific training in the area of Government property, nor has it defined, throughout the Corps structure, the contracting office's responsibility in this area.

In the coming months, the OPARC will take action to improve the management of the USACE Government Property Program and the quality of its Government property related submissions to SARDA. An assessment will be made of training and experience within the USACE contracting workforce, to identify USACE unique training needs and subject matter coverage. Thereafter, we can request Army develop or offer assistance in developing a one or two day tutorial/training, including software requirements, to cover USACE deficiencies and allow corrective activity.

The OPARC is looking forward to working closely with Army representatives to develop non-formal specific topic training for Corps personnel and with each USACE field activity to ensure that appropriate personnel are trained -- hopefully, in sufficient time to improve FY 1998 submissions to SARDA.

*By Anthony Cochran*

The following is a schedule of Acquisition Management Surveys planned for the remainder of FY-98:

24-27 Feb 98 - Charleston  
10-13 Mar 98 - Albuquerque  
14-17 Apr 98 - Huntsville  
19-22 May 98 - Little Rock  
16-19 June 98 - Nashville  
7-10 July 98 - Portland  
4-7 Aug 98 - San Francisco & SPD

Chiefs of Contracting Offices should continue to focus on Acquisition Reform Initiatives and overall efficiency & effectiveness (e.g. actions/\$ per person, cost per dollar, etc.)

Acquisition Management Surveys indicate that areas of improvement exist in: (1) "Investment in people". Specifically, contracting managers can develop initiatives to enhance the educational & professional development of CP-14 and CP-18 personnel in contracting; (2) Improving Customer Service. Site visits by Contracting Officers are limited in some cases and in others non-existent. Such initiatives are needed to assess customer feedback, enhance customer satisfaction and improve technical awareness; (3) Utilization of Best Value. Application of Best Value practices have increased within the Corps however we can improve significantly; and (4) Development of Solicitations. All solicitations citing Brand Name or Equal should conform to DFARS 211.270 and include all requirements, e.g. salient characteristics, generic description, list of all known acceptable brand name products including name of manufacturer, etc.

From a positive perspective, Contracting Officers have been found to be full participants in Project Review Boards & Quality Councils. Solid teaming & partnering with technical staff elements continues, and is encouraged. Internal Reviews & certain management controls have become standard practices.

In responding to USACE "Data Calls" all Contracting Offices are urged to coordinate actions with appropriate staff elements prior to forwarding a final response, e.g. Request for Extraordinary "Relief" under FAR PART 50 should be coordinated with counsel. We can support the decision making process of higher authority by insuring that accurate data is furnished in a timely fashion.

Portland District has been honored by the U.S. Small Business Administration as 1997 Agency of the Year for support to Small Disadvantaged Business.

*By Anthony Cochran*

### ***Central Contractor Registration***

Central Contractor Registration is the Federal government's repository of pertinent data common to all contractors, and the single place for contractors to register for conducting business with all federal government agencies. Contractors register only once, with a requirement for annual renewal Benefits of CCR include: One time registration for all federal government requirements Greater Visibility and access to all federal procurement agencies for both electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and non-EDI capable firms, Less time entering contractor information reduces errors and expedites payments using EDI.

Only valid contractors registered in CCR by March 31 will be eligible for contract awards with the Department of Defense. A paper form for registration may be obtained by calling 1 800-334-3414, or through the CCR web site at <http://www.acq.osd.mil/ec/>.

The Federal Electronic Commerce Acquisition Team (chartered by OFPP) issued a final report Oct 13, 1994, Streamlining Procurement through Electronic Commerce. It defined the overall architecture which included a single means of supplier registration to do business electronically with the Federal Government. This OFPP initiative was a result of an executive memorandum signed by President

Clinton directing a definition of an architecture for a government wide electronic commerce capability. Via Memorandum dated Feb 10, 1997, DOD (Ms. Spector) advised of its plans to propose regulations requiring that contractors must be registered in the CCR. Via memorandum dated June 11, 1997, DOD (Ms. Spector) advised of a new registration date, no earlier than March 31, 1998.

An interim rule regarding CCR was published in the Federal Register, Vol 62, Number 178, dated Sept 15, 1997

Again this is a reminder to all Contracting activities that as of March 31, 1998 all Contractors doing business with the Army must be registered in the Centralized Contractor Registration (CCR). Please advise those contractors who are or want to do business with DoD that they must be registered by March 31, 1998. You can get a copy of the registration form on the web site [www.acq.osd.mil](http://www.acq.osd.mil), click on the office Navigator, then click on Principal Deputy-Defense Procurement and scroll down to the Centralized Contractor Registration (CCR) and click on.

*By Dave Petersen*

### ***Basic Ordering Agreements (BOA) and Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPA)***

BOA-- A written instrument of understanding, negotiated with a contractor, that contains terms and clauses applying to future contracts (orders) during its term- a description of or services to be provided; and, methods for pricing, and issuing future orders

under the agreement Still have to comply with FAR Part 6 when initiating or placing orders against a BOA.. Efficiency may be gained in reaward however still requires advertising and negotiation of proposal for each order. Contractors are not required to accept an order and that could lead to additional time to prepare and award a solicitation.

BPA--A simplified method of filling anticipated repetitive needs for low value supplies or services by establishing "charge accounts" with qualified sources. As the order is placed and consummated upon performance, the supplier is under no obligation to perform.

**General Applications/** BOA--Used to expedite contracting for supplies or services when specific items, quantities, or prices are not known and a substantial number of requirements for the supplies or services are anticipated to be purchased from one contractor.

BPA--Established to provide low value supplies or services to support operations of an office, installation, project, or function.

**Corps Applications/** Some of current uses of BOAs and BPAs include training, tree removal, heavy equipment maintenance, real estate appraisals, drafting supplies, and general office supplies.

Normally BOA's are used for spare parts provisioning since it can lead to economies in ordering by reducing procurement lead time, inventory investment and inventory obsolescence. They do not lead themselves to augmenting traditional HTRW/JOC/Construction/A-E contracting since requirements differ by project. It should be noted that New Orleans has several BOAs for dredging to augment the Corps Reserve Fleet, but they have never been used.

BPAs can be used to fill a wide variety of requirements to support office operations when the exact items, quantities and delivery requirements are not known in advance. Requirements are normally based on historical knowledge and are priced in advance.



*Improving Efficiencies  
(OPARC Reports)*